

recognized the possibility of threats from terrorists, both from within and without our borders.

In 1988, Congress passed a ban on undetectable firearms to prevent the manufacture, sale, importation, shipping, possession, transfer, or receipt of firearms that could not be detected by metal detectors or x-ray machines. Since passengers are not permitted to bring firearms on to planes and individuals cannot bring firearms into government buildings, it only makes sense that we ensure that the firearms purchased in this country are detectable by the security machines in those places.

The Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988 provided a sunset on the ban after 10 years to take into account any changes in technology of security machines or firearms. The ban was extended in 1998 for an additional 5 years, and H.R. 3348 would extend this ban for an additional 10 years. The penalties will remain the same: any violation of the ban is punishable by a fine or imprisonment up to 5 years.

It is easy to see why this ban, now more than ever before, must be extended. This is not the time to put our Nation's airports in jeopardy by allowing individuals to pass through security with undetected firearms. Plastic firearms, which are real guns that can do real harm, can breach this security. We can prevent that by prohibiting the manufacture of plastic firearms in the first place, and that is what this bill does.

I would point out that both the National Rifle Association and the U.S. Department of Justice support this legislation. I would like to read into the RECORD a letter which I received 2 days ago from Chuck Cunningham, director of Federal affairs for the NRA:

Dear Chairman Sensenbrenner: On behalf of our 4 million members, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 3348, your legislation to extend the sunset of the restriction of undetectable firearms.

"It is very important to be absolutely clear about the history of this legislation. When originally passed in 1988, the Undetectable Firearms Act did not ban any existing firearm. The extension of this restriction would also not prohibit any firearm in production today. This legislation was and still is purely preventive. The sunset provision was included as a way to balance the possible future development of nonmetallic firearms against likely improvements in detection technology. The statute also allows the executive branch to reduce restrictions under the bill to adapt to those changes.

"Based on the current state of firearms and detection technology, we believe that a straight 10-year extension is an appropriate way to allow continued flexibility, while removing the issue beyond current political debates. Please let me know if we can be of assistance in the speedy passage of this legislation.

This is signed, "Charles H. Cunningham, Director of Federal Affairs" for the National Rifle Association.

I believe that this is commonsense legislation. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary for his leadership on this issue. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, we need to do much more to prevent dangerous firearms from falling into the hands of would-be terrorists and other violent criminals.

We could start by renewing the current assault weapons ban. We could also strengthen criminal background checks and close the gun show loophole so that rogue gun dealers will not be able to evade the current spirit of the law and sell guns to criminals and suspected terrorists. Finally, we need to protect us from firearms that cannot be detected by metal detectors or x-ray machines.

The bill before us today achieves the last of these objectives. It renews the Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988, also known as the Plastic Gun Law, which makes it illegal to manufacture, import, possess, or transfer a firearm that is not detectable by walk-through metal detectors or airport x-ray machines.

Renewing the ban on plastic guns is vital. The gun industry clearly has the technology to manufacture firearms that cannot be detected by metal detectors or x-ray machines. As early as 1986, the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment determined that the "technology does exist to manufacture certain firearms which would be completely or almost completely non-metallic" and that "plastic handguns may be available on the commercial market quite soon."

Indeed, shortly thereafter, in 1986, an attempt was made by Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi to purchase more than 100 firearms produced in Austria and constructed almost entirely out of hardened plastic.

With the ongoing war on terrorism, it is even more important than ever that we take an aggressive stance against dangerous weapons that make our society vulnerable to future terrorist-related attacks. H.R. 3348 was introduced with this in mind; and while I would strongly prefer to make this bill permanent and not just an extension, I think the extension is an important step in the right direction, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3348, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1130

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the motion to go to conference on H.R. 2800, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2800, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2800) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MRS. LOWEY

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mrs. LOWEY moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill, H.R. 2800, making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year 2004 be instructed to insist on the provisions of the Senate bill providing a total of \$1,726,000,000 to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII the gentleman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this motion to instruct the conferees on the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill will ensure that the House is clearly on record to provide the highest possible funding level for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in 2004.

With the \$700 million provided in the Labor HHS bill for these purposes, acceptance of these funding levels would bring the total amount provided for HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria in 2004 to \$2.4 billion.

This motion urges the House conferees to approve the higher levels in the Senate-passed bill. While I had